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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 000778

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION CHAIR SUSPENDED OVER  
ALLEGED MURDER LINK

REF: JAKARTA 299 AND PREVIOUS

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Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

**¶11.** (C) SUMMARY: The Chair of Indonesia's Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), Antasari Azhar, has been suspended from duty amid shocking and lurid allegations that he was involved in the murder of an Indonesian businessman. After the Attorney General's Office publicly linked Azhar to the murder investigation, the influential KPK immediately suspended Azhar on May 1. There remain concerns that Azhar's legal problems not impact Indonesia's progress on the anti-corruption front. END SUMMARY.

ANTI-CORRUPTION BODY SUSPENDS CHAIR

**¶12.** (SBU) The Indonesian Corruption Eradication Commission has suspended Chair Antasari Azhar. This action was taken pending the outcome of an investigation into the murder of Indonesian businessman Nasrudin Zulkarnaen. In accordance with the laws regarding the KPK, Azhar relinquished his duties as Chair of the KPK on May 1st so that the anti-corruption body's efforts would not be hindered by an ongoing investigation. The other four KPK commissioners will rotate into the top slot to ensure continuity in KPK investigations and leadership.

ALLEGATIONS OF A SCANDAL

**¶13.** (SBU) The allegations are shocking and lurid, and have made headlines in Indonesia. On March 14, Nasrudin Zulkarnaen, the former president of a state-owned pharmaceutical firm, was shot by two men on a motorcycle after he finished a round of golf in a Jakarta suburb. The alleged motives behind the killing, and reasons for Azhar's possible involvement, are unclear. Some have suggested that the murder was connected to a love triangle and Azhar's alleged affair with Zulkarnaen's third wife or girlfriend (Azhar's wife is standing by him and asserts he is innocent of these lurid claims).

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE INVESTIGATES

**¶14.** (SBU) The investigation is getting into high gear. At this stage, the Attorney General's Office (AGO) has only named Azhar a "witness," although under the Indonesian legal system this is sometimes the first step before being named a suspect. The AGO also banned his travel, leading many to believe that he will be named a suspect soon. The AGO has

arrested nine other suspects who allegedly played different roles in the case, from hit-man to financier.

¶ 15. (C) Prior to joining the KPK, Antasari Azhar worked for Abdul H. Ritonga, the head of general crimes at the AGO, whose office will be prosecuting the case. In the past, the AGO has been publicly criticized for not pursuing high-level corruption cases or other cases involving controversial or public figures. The summons for Azhar as a witness could bolster the public's perception of the professionalism of the AGO.

HOPE IS THAT KPK NOT TARNISHED

¶ 16. (SBU) President Yudhoyono expressed his support for the investigation, asking that Azhar be treated fairly and with due process. Up to this point, Azhar has been a respected figure. Presidential spokesperson Andi Mallarangeng said the investigation was an example of strict law enforcement and that no one was above the law. One of Azhar's attorneys reminded the press that Azhar has made enemies because of his anti-corruption efforts and regularly receives threats against his reputation and safety.

¶ 17. (SBU) Under Azhar's leadership the KPK has a one hundred percent conviction rate, including the high profile convictions of eight current and former lawmakers, a former central bank governor, and a state prosecutor from the Attorney General's Office (see reftels). Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW), an anti-corruption watchdog, praised the KPK for suspending Azhar and urged the KPK to continue their investigations into several high-profile cases while he is suspended.

¶ 18. (C) Some anti-corruption activists are concerned that a

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protracted investigation could tarnish the image of the KPK. Given the successful convictions of several sitting lawmakers, the status of pending Anti-Corruption Court legislation in the DPR has been tenuous. ICW and other anti-corruption NGOs hope that Azhar's suspension will promote and not hinder anti-corruption efforts and the progress that Indonesia has made.

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